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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes the CORAL (Communities Organizing Resources To Advance Learning) program within five California communities: Pasadena, Long Beach, San Jose, Fresno, and Sacramento. This initiative, begun in 1999, is committed to a community-based and community-building approach to supporting learning and focuses on improving academic achievement during out-of-school hours. It is based on a theory that academic achievement will be improved through a combination of community-level changes. Its mission is to improve academic achievement in grades K-12 by mobilizing families and aligning community-wide networks of enriching out-of-school resources to support student learning. Each community adapts the CORAL model to local circumstances, forming community partnerships and a sense of collective responsibility in the process. Each CORAL community also incorporates an academic-based Youth Institute to engage high school students. It begins with an intensive summer program and continues throughout the year on a regular basis. CORAL communities emphasize technology use, harnessing technology's power in the areas of learning, communications, and capacity building. An important element in capacity building is educating parents and caregivers to build an informed constituency that will demand high quality activities for their children and work to improve the quality of schools. Six appendices present CORAL's theory of change model, 15 strategies of successful after-school programs, the consultant team roster, the National Advisory Committee roster, site contacts, and a tear-out card for getting involved in CORAL. (SM)

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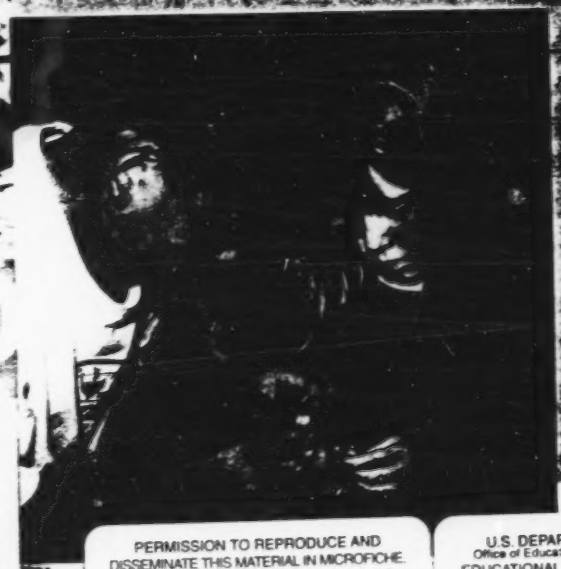
COMMUNITIES organizing RESOURCES to advance LEARNING

Five CITIES One VISION

CORAL: Linking Communities, Children and Learning



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COMMUNITIES ORGANIZING RESOURCES TO ADVANCE LEARNING

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www.coralconnect.org

CORAL

FOREWORD

The James Irvine Foundation seeks to improve the lives of young people in California by supporting innovative programs that serve and enrich them. Toward that end, the Foundation has launched Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning—CORAL. A community-based learning initiative, CORAL is designed to boost the achievement of youth through out-of-school programs. The initiative is now taking root in Pasadena, Long Beach, San Jose, Fresno and Sacramento.

At the heart of the CORAL initiative lie four powerful ideas:

- *About Students*: CORAL believes that young people who participate in strong programs out of school can achieve more in school.

- *About Organizations*: CORAL believes that bringing organizations together to provide out-of-school programs can create a network of relationships and resources, which will help them more effectively support youth in the long run.

- *About Schools*: CORAL believes that schools will be strengthened as young people become more active and productive learners and as parents and communities enthusiastically embrace their responsibilities to help children achieve.

- *About Communities*: CORAL believes that student achievement is the responsibility of more than just the school. It is a shared responsibility—of child, family, school and community.

Recognizing the need to better educate young people and the power of out-of-school programs, the Foundation has committed to CORAL for the long term.

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We are committed to a community based—and community-building—approach. Rather than use ready made designs prescribed from the outside, each community adapts the CORAL model to local circumstances. In the process, community partnerships will be formed, and a sense of collective responsibility for student learning developed, which will sustain such programs long into the future.

Written to provide an overview of the CORAL program for participants within the five communities and interested observers around the nation, this report is the first in a series of publications on the initiative. *CORAL Connect*, a web-based resource that will use new technologies to teach students and improve communication among participants in the project, will be online in January 2002. We welcome your thoughts on this report and the broader effort of communities organizing resources to advance learning.

Dennis A. Collins
President & CEO
The James Irvine Foundation
Fall 2001

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imagine a community

Where every child has a safe and enriching place to go when school is out.

Where young people experience joy in learning and have confidence in their abilities.

Where children of all ages and backgrounds come together to participate in creative, educational and fun activities.

Where parents are involved in activities alongside their children and every child has a relationship with at least one caring adult.

Where opportunities to learn and develop occur at all hours of the day, all days of the week, all over the neighborhood, in schools, churches, temples, mosques, libraries, museums, parks, community centers and even business offices.

Where children's out-of-school educational experiences result in improved academic achievement at school, and higher expectations and standards in schools.

Where community leaders, activists, educators and families form strong relationships and mobilize toward a common vision of student success.

Where more and more people become engaged until out-of-school education is a fundamental part of the fabric of the community.

A web of community relationships so tightly knit that no child can fall through.

That's the vision of CORAL – a vision of *Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning.*

education

Out-of-school education can provide a "ladder of opportunity" where older children learn skills and then pass that knowledge on to younger children.

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WHAT IS CORAL?

CORAL is a journey just beginning, an experiment still taking shape – it's chapter one in a seven-year story with the ending not yet written.

It's an ambitious and innovative experiment launched in 1999 by The James Irvine Foundation to build a learning community in and among five very similar and yet surprisingly different California cities.

It's a project forged from a conviction that relationships and collaborations are the forces that create positive change and a belief that learning is the shared responsibility of an entire community and everyone who lives there, not just the schools.

CORAL is a bold endeavor to link communities, neighborhoods and people of all ages, backgrounds and walks of life around one common mission:

To improve academic achievement in grades K-12 by mobilizing families and aligning community-wide networks of enriching out-of-school resources to support student learning.

WHY OUT-OF-SCHOOL EDUCATION MATTERS

What children do when they're not in school is important.

All across America there is growing recognition of just how important those out-of-school days and hours are to a child's social and academic development.

According to the 1992 Carnegie Corporation report, *A Matter of Time, Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours*, young people have a great deal of unstructured, unsupervised and unproductive out-of-school time.

In fact, children spend only 20% of their waking hours in school. Public schools usually meet for six hours a day, 180 days per year – leaving 185 days and many hours each day free. Those hours can be stressful and even dangerous for children who are on their own before and after school, on weekends and during summer or other school breaks. Many of them must contend with empty houses and unsafe neighborhoods. Nationwide, an estimated eight million young people ages five to fourteen spend time without adult supervision on a regular basis.

Even a child with a parent at home during out-of-school hours may still need academic assistance, a safe place to play and the chance to participate in art, music and sports. The most common activity for children after school is watching television, with young people watching an estimated 23 hours of television per week after school and in the evenings.

Studies show that after-school programs are both desperately needed and in many cases impressively effective. According to research by Dr. Reginald Clark, a nationally recognized author and researcher in education and family involvement, low achieving students spend the majority of their non-school hours involved in activities that have little benefit to them during their in-school time. By contrast, high-achieving students participate in more activities that reinforce the skills and knowledge learned in school.

Experts acknowledge that children and youth who regularly attend high-quality after school programs have better grades and conduct in school, better peer relations and emotional adjustment and lower incidences of drug-use, violence and pregnancy.

Out-of-school programs are in great demand across the country. The best programs do a great deal more than keep young people off-the-streets; quality programs give children safe, supervised places to do homework, strengthen academic skills, develop social skills, participate in sports, explore expressive arts and enjoy new, enriching activities.

I want CORAL to be something that everyone feels **BELONGS** to them. All of the players need to understand that it's their program – the churches, the schools, the **COMMUNITY** groups, the parents, the kids – the whole city needs to own it.

— Lorna Miller, Director,
Office for Creative Connections

Nationwide some 17,000 organizations offer community-based youth programs and many of them provide enriching and rewarding experiences for young people. Even so, programs are fragmented, underfinanced and in chronic short supply. Young people with the greatest need have the least access to services.

Noting that "the time has come to change these conditions dramatically," Carnegie's 1992 report advocated "a new national effort to make use of non-school hours for the vast and important job of promoting development among American youth." The report called for communities to build networks of affordable, accessible, safe and challenging youth programs.

In 1997 President Clinton responded with a new program, the Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, and in 1998 he dramatically increased program funding. In 2001 Congress appropriated $846 million for the 21st CCLC to fund 6,800 rural and inner city after-school centers serving some 1.2 million children. The 21st CCLC grant money allows programs to leverage and link together other streams of federal, state or local funding.

In California the After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Program (ASLSNPP) funds 963 schools to work in partnership in their local communities to provide after-school programs. This translates into services for nearly 100,000 children and youth.

Still, the current supply of after-school programs is not able to accommodate all of the children who want or need additional learning and enrichment. The U.S. General

12 PRINCIPLES OF CORAL

1. Educating children is a community-wide responsibility, not just the province of the schools, and every community member can contribute to the success of young people.

2. Each community has a different set of assets, priorities and challenges that preclude the imposition of generic solutions from outside the community.

3. Neighborhood and community programs that focus on academic achievement during out-of-school hours can have a positive impact on the in-school performance of children and youth, and on the schools themselves.

4. Sustainable, systemic change can be achieved by building neighborhood capacity and aligning programs and organizations toward a shared vision.

5. Diversity is an asset that enriches life and learning; successful programs build on the strengths of that diversity as well as existing relationships and services.

6. Inclusivity and collaboration among diverse circles of community members is essential to building a community-wide network that supports the academic achievement of all children.

7. Community-based planning needs to be accompanied by timely and coordinated training and technical assistance, with a special emphasis on communication and technology.

8. Out-of-school educational programs should enrich, complement and reinforce, not duplicate, in-school curriculum.

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9. Young people can serve, as well as be served, and should be actively involved in the planning and decision-making process.

10. Successful youth-serving programs enable young people to develop close relationships with peers and caring adults.

11. Communities can learn from each other by sharing challenges and accomplishments in a meaningful and authentic manner.

12. Building trust throughout the initiative at all levels is crucial to the successful implementation of a statewide initiative.

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CORAL inspires children and youth to explore their strengths and abilities by engaging in a wide range of community-based learning activities.

Accounting Office estimates that in the year 2002 the current number of out-of-school programs for school-age children will meet as little as 25% of the demand in some urban areas. In California current programs of the ASLSNPP serve only a fraction of the children in need.

At a time when the nation is in search of ways to improve educational outcomes for America's youth, CORAL has been created to enhance learning not just after school, but on weekends, holidays, summers or any other time children are out of school.

Out-of-school education can make a powerful difference in children's lives by providing chances for young people to grow, develop and continue learning. Education married to enrichment. That is what out-of-school programs can provide. That is what CORAL offers.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Since 1937, The James Irvine Foundation has supported programs to improve the quality of life in California. In the spring of 1999, after almost two years of planning, the Foundation launched a new initiative to encourage academic achievement of youth during out-of-school hours. That initiative is called Communities Organizing Resources to Advance Learning (CORAL).

CORAL is based on a simple, yet compelling, concept: by building the capacity of local youth-serving programs within a community while simultaneously mobilizing broad-based support both for the programs and for academic achievement, a framework for advancing children's learning can be put into place and sustained in that community over time.

This theory requires four major and concurrent strategies:

1. Mobilizing broad support from policy makers, school leaders, neighborhood groups, faith-based organizations, funders, business leaders and the media to build a more supportive local infrastructure for students;
2. Assisting youth-serving organizations to work together and with schools to provide a rich and broad-based array of educational opportunities both in and out of school;
3. Educating parents and caregivers to build an informed constituency who will demand high quality activities for their children;
4. Selecting five California communities to implement CORAL.

What distinguishes CORAL from other initiatives is its core conviction that education is a community-wide responsibility and its emphasis on building capacity within communities to produce sustained improvements in educational achievement.

"Most programs begin and end with a focus on the student, designing activities intended to help meet achievement goals (i.e. the tutoring model)," says Eugene Garcia, Professor at the Graduate School of Education at the University of California at Berkeley. "CORAL recognizes the importance of incorporating non-school entities, including the community where students live and their out-of-school activities. Taking a more comprehensive and localized approach, CORAL strives to enhance overall well-being – health, social relationships, peer and family interactions – and the community environment as they relate to educational endeavors."

"The ideas behind CORAL are powerful," says Irvine President and CEO Dennis A. Collins. "If communities learn how to support and provide quality out-of-school programs for youth and can better coordinate their resources to do so, then we will realize our long-term goal of helping youth achieve academic success."

To put its four concurrent strategies in motion, the Foundation identified communities to serve as CORAL sites, and is providing them broad-based financial support and technical assistance. These sites will develop detailed, multi-year plans and form local collaborations and partnerships, all centered around building a network of complementary educational options for children and youth. An evaluation team is assessing progress and outcomes.

Even as the Foundation continues to refine the theory and model for CORAL, the project has gone into action. Pasadena was the first of the five California communities to be selected. Since that time, Long Beach, San Jose, Fresno and Sacramento have also become CORAL sites.

"AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR I HAD SIX PARTNERSHIPS AND NOW I HAVE 20, AND IT'S A RESULT IN GREAT PART TO ALL THE NETWORKING AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING THAT COME OUT OF CORAL. ONCE YOU KNOW PEOPLE AND HAVE AN IDEA OF THEIR PROGRAMS AND HOW YOU CAN WORK TOGETHER, COLLABORATION IS INEVITABLE. IT'S EXPONENTIAL."

program provider

elementary school principal

"THE CORAL PROCESS HAS BEEN VERY POSITIVE. THIS IS EXACTLY WHÁT I NEEDED. AT MY SCHOOL 60% OF THE STUDENTS ARE BUSED IN AND ONLY 40% LIVE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD. AN AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM CAN HELP BUILD A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE TWO POPULATIONS, CREATING LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS AS WELL AS HELPING THE STUDENTS SUCCEED ACADEMICALLY."

"By targeting five communities, we are intentionally concentrating our resources to yield meaningful results," says Diane Frankel, Irvine's Program Director in Children, Youth and Families. "By extending Foundation support over a seven-year period, we are providing sufficient time to see tangible evidence that CORAL has made a significant difference."

Elementary age students are the primary target population for CORAL. In addition, each CORAL community will organize a Youth Institute for high school students, which develops their academic skills while preparing them to serve as tutors and mentors in their neighborhoods during the school year.

While CORAL is not a school reform initiative, CORAL communities will partner with local schools. In fact, deep, meaningful participation by the school system has emerged as a key element. "Teachers, principals, curriculum specialists and superintendents – they all need to be involved," says Frankel, "if we expect to see evidence that CORAL students and alumni have increased their motivation to learn and their knowledge of how to access a learning environment, and improved their attendance rates, study habits and grades."

THE CORAL PROCESS

The selection of a CORAL site is based on an exhaustive analysis of potential communities and possible partners within those communities. Community data is reviewed, including demographics, school statistics and community-level strategic plans. Interviews are conducted with ever-widening circles of local policymakers, school officials, faith leaders, neighborhood advocates, youth-serving organizations, business people and residents.

Each of the five CORAL sites was chosen because it contained existing conditions favorable to supporting community change. The Foundation based its evaluation of these conditions on a number of community readiness factors: the existence of a significant number of youth-serving program providers or private nonprofit organizations, a diverse mix of community resources, a track record of civic collaboration, a progressive local government and a school district interested in participating with neighborhoods and parents to create positive change.

I'm really excited about CORAL because it's the kind of programming I believe in – finding **INNOVATIVE** and creative ways to make kids **EAGER** to learn and keep them learning.

— Denise Clayton-Leonard,
Outreach Coordinator, Long Beach Museum of Art

THREE PHASES OF CORAL

PREPLANNING – This initial three-to six-month phase can be described as the fact-finding or discovery stage. It involves "mapping" and analyzing local assets, educational resources, community organizations and neighborhood centers serving children and youth. Key issues, gaps in service, major obstacles and community-level realities must be recognized while existing programs, partnerships and public/private ventures are identified. Preplanning grants are $75,000 per community.

PLANNING – This phase takes place over a nine-to twelve-month period and focuses on six core goals: (1) mobilizing a diverse and representative mix of partners; (2) building skills, trust and team cooperation among stakeholders; (3) identifying key community goals and priorities, especially academic goals; (4) developing consensus around critical decision points; (5) developing strategies for aligning partners and creating a working plan for implementation; and (6) developing core activities and content that complement the school curriculum.

Under the guidance of the lead agency, a steering committee or other governance body is formed, and subcommittees and task forces are created. Focus groups are conducted. Community meetings, one-on-one outreach and large public events take place, all designed to inform and inspire the planning process. Consensus is built as key decisions are made and a comprehensive plan is developed. Planning grants are $500,000 per community.

IMPLEMENTATION – This multi-year phase begins with the exciting and challenging shift from strategizing to acting. CORAL sites receive two-year renewable implementation grants of $4 million per community as they put their carefully developed plans into action. As programming is implemented, each community slowly expands its out-of-school programs, making midcourse corrections as needed, while continually building community capacity.

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CORAL recognizes that everyone doesn't learn in the same way. Many children learn better when they can see, hear and touch in real-life situations.

The five cities selected represent a geographic mix of California communities. Fresno is in the very center of the state. Sacramento is in the north central section. San Jose is part of the San Francisco Bay metropolitan area, and both Long Beach and Pasadena are in the Southern California basin.

Once a site is selected, a local lead agency is chosen to coordinate and mobilize the organizing effort in each CORAL community.

At each site the lead agency – or agencies – must be recognized and respected in the community, able to spark collaborations, build alliances and unite a large and diverse cross-section of the community. Lead agencies should have extensive program and service delivery experience plus sufficient resources to create a sustainable effort.

Once sites and lead agencies have been selected, CORAL becomes a seven-year process with three phases. Grants are provided to fund each phase.

CORAL places a priority on capacity building, which involves helping local community partners strengthen their operations and expand their ability to serve their communities. By ensuring that these community partners have the skills they need among staff, board members and volunteers and that they have the systems in place to run their organizations smoothly and efficiently, CORAL is creating a program infrastructure that can be sustained over time.

In each CORAL community, the lead agency must manage capacity building on three levels - within organizations, across community partnerships and within the community at large. Growth on all levels is necessary if CORAL is to lay the groundwork for lasting change.

CORAL'S three-day retreat really sparked **EXCITEMENT** about what the possibilities were. We're all working in the same city, all of us serving kids in different ways and now we're establishing **CONNECTIONS** and collaborating. Meeting people and developing stronger bonds has been great.

— Kristine Wingert, Programming Provider,
Camp Fire Boys and Girls

CORAL IN ACTION

Pasadena, Long Beach, San Jose, Fresno and Sacramento – five different California cities, separated by geography, politics and socio-economic conditions, united through a common purpose and a belief that all children can learn and succeed.

The sequential rollout among the five community sites is allowing the CORAL communities to observe and relate to each other's triumphs and missteps. Lessons are being learned and shared, relationships established and nurtured.

Already it is clear that the planning and decision-making process can be laborious. Issues of power and authority, and of race and diversity, surface and must be addressed early and openly, so that a foundation of trust is created. At times, tensions erupt around the following concerns:

Building Capacity. The process of building capacity in organizations or communities is more complicated than simply providing assistance when requested. Organizations are often so focused on day-to-day activities that they do not have the time or expertise to know what type of assistance could help them improve their work. Lead agencies must be committed to improving their own organizational capacity, gaining skills and resources to manage the community-wide program networks and helping their partner organizations strengthen and improve.

They must also recognize that capacity building is an ongoing process that starts with assessing effectiveness and identifying areas that need improvement. Next, appropriate sources of technical assistance must be selected. Then, once new skills are implemented, the process should begin again by assessing the improvements and identifying the next opportunity. CORAL lead agencies and program providers must be prepared to repeat this cycle many times.

Governance. Each phase of the CORAL process requires different governance practices and structural arrangements among the lead agency, the Foundation and other involved stakeholders. During the community assessment process, the lead agency is the single grantee of the Foundation and the coordinator of all local preplanning work. Once the planning stage is underway, the lead agency must develop a steering committee and task forces and begin to negotiate the sharing of initiative control with the community.

Issues of fit between CORAL and the lead agency's goals can become magnified during the transition from the planning phase to programming implementation. As sites move through implementation, the lead agency must work with the community and the Foundation to assess roles and ensure the proper leadership structure is in place.

Power-Sharing. Perhaps the most difficult hurdle for community governance has emerged around the sharing of authority and power. Anointing any one group to be the lead agency in charge of a large philanthropic initiative can be a difficult choice, particularly if there is a history of factionalism in the community. Issues of competition and mistrust can arise and prove divisive. The lead agency can be vulnerable to considerable community criticism around the handling of initiative objectives and money. Legitimate financing of staff and operating support can be viewed suspiciously by other stakeholders unless there is open communication and well-articulated decision-making processes.

As the lead agency or agencies make day-to-day decisions and attempt to keep the process moving forward, community residents can grow concerned about losing power over the initiative. Some can become discouraged by the time needed to make decisions and plan programs. Lines of authority and accountability need to be made clear. Everyone involved must understand what work belongs to the lead agency and what work belongs to the CORAL community and its decision-making structures.

Foundation Involvement. Striking a balance between community autonomy and Foundation jurisdiction also has been challenging. Early on, the Foundation took a hands-on role in the planning process, and this close proximity unquestionably accelerated learning for the communities. Since then, the Foundation has seen the need to reduce its direct intervention in day-to-day management by defining and communicating a clear framework of goals and expectations, then allowing participating communities autonomy to operate within those parameters.

Relationships with Schools. As CORAL progresses, the need for a strong connection between CORAL sites and local schools has become apparent. Although CORAL concentrates its efforts on out-of-school resources, school district administrators, principals and teachers clearly need to be at the table as active collaborators in shaping the priorities and strategies.

Personnel Transitions. Even in its short life span, CORAL has seen several transitions in key personnel. Lead agencies that have deep experience in hiring and training staff can manage quite well during such transitions while others may struggle until the right person is found. While there is no way to prevent staff turnover, program managers must be trained to share responsibilities, develop clear reporting functions and build a broad base of skills so that the loss of a key individual does not set programs back.

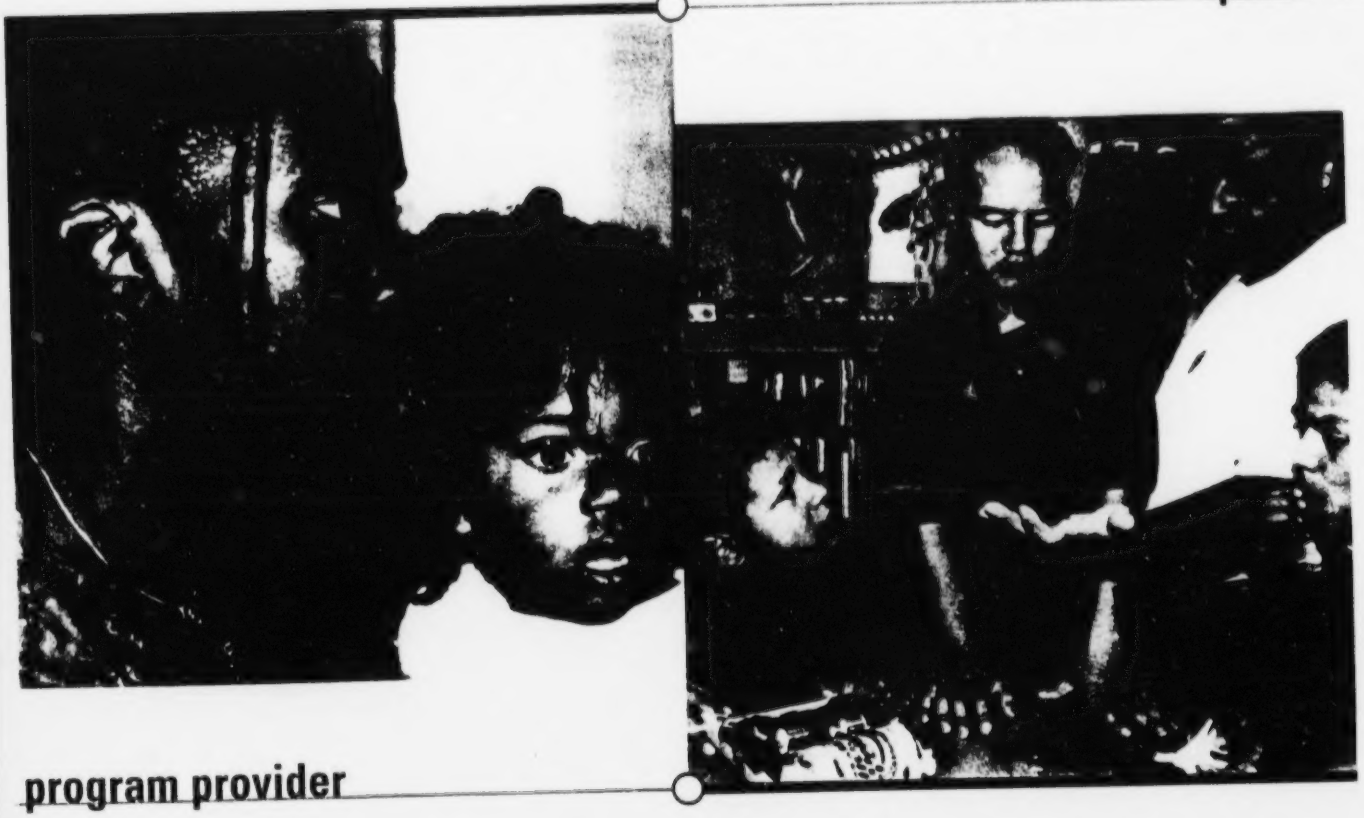
Challenges and conflicts are to be expected in a project with the scale and complexity of CORAL. To mitigate issues that have arisen, CORAL communities have employed a range of practices including expert community facilitation, attention to training and team building, technical assistance, open communication and well-articulated decision-making processes. In each community, enthusiasm remains high and the vision of what CORAL can be continues to drive the process forward.

CHALLENGES and **CONFLICTS** are to be expected in a project with the scale and complexity of CORAL.

— CORAL Consultant

"HIS GRADES THIS YEAR HAVE BEEN WONDERFUL, AND I THINK THE INSTITUTE WAS A BIG PART OF IT. WHEN HE WENT BACK TO SCHOOL IN THE FALL, HIS SCIENCE TEACHER ASKED IF ANYONE KNEW HOW TO DESIGN A WEB PAGE, AND HE WAS THE ONLY KID IN HIS CLASS WHO RAISED HIS HAND. THE TEACHER TOLD ME LATER, "YOUR SON IS REALLY BRIGHT AND KNOWS WHAT HE IS TALKING ABOUT," AND I SAID TO MYSELF, "O.K., THANK YOU CORAL."

parent



program provider

"PARENTS REALLY WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO DO BETTER. THEY SEEK OUT PLACES WHERE THEIR CHILD CAN GET THE SUPPORT THEY NEED. IT GOES BEYOND THE CHILD TO STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY. WE SEE PARENTS IN HERE WORKING ALONGSIDE THEIR KIDS. SOME NIGHTS THERE ARE SO MANY CHILDREN AND PARENTS CROWDED IN HERE, WORKING IN EVERY AVAILABLE INCH OF SPACE, THAT YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO WALK."

involvement

Someone to listen, someone to help, someone to care – that's what every child needs and CORAL strives to give.

community:

PASADENA

Nestled at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains with downtown Los Angeles only 10 miles away, Pasadena is a sun-drenched city rich in cultural and educational institutions. Within its 23 square miles are five major museums, the world-renowned California Institute of Technology, 25 parks, an impressive historic civic center, a restored downtown, and home of the landmark Rose Bowl stadium and Tournament of Roses parade.

Just as impressive are Pasadena's tree-lined neighborhoods full of historic architecture and Craftsman-style bungalows. These neighborhoods are home to an increasingly diverse population as well as to concerned residents and organizations committed to working together to solve civic problems and create a better community.

Pasadena's many agencies, activists, residents and community leaders have a strong history of collaboration, making the city an appropriate launching pad for CORAL.

Population: 133,936

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The Story of Pasadena

As the first community chosen to be a CORAL site, Pasadena served as a laboratory for all that was to come.

In 1999, Pasadena was already a city committed to education and youth. The federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Center collaborative, PasadenaLEARNS, was underway. This collaborative now operates after-school programs at 16 of Pasadena's 23 public schools, although they are limited to serving only 20% of children enrolled in each school.

Another 120 youth-serving organizations existed in Pasadena and provided some 300 activities when youngsters were not in school, according to a study by the Office for Creative Connections (OCC).

Yet local children complained that there was nothing for them to do and nowhere to go. Something wasn't working.

OCC uncovered several barriers. Fee programs proliferated, but low-income families couldn't afford to pay those fees and lacked transportation to get to them. Sometimes parents simply didn't know about programs. All the free programs turned out to be working at or above capacity.

Clearly, the need for CORAL was there, as well as resources to build on. Plus, Pasadena had a strong record for making community collaborations work.

OCC, an outreach agency of All Saints Church, was asked to serve as CORAL's local lead agency because of its historic role of bringing people together to work on creative solutions. "We don't provide services, we're a neutral agency," explains OCC Director Lorna Miller. "Our mission is to listen and bring people and programs together to solve problems."

A 32-member steering committee was formed and, inspired by the vision of CORAL, worked tirelessly to shape the project. An additional 35 people participated in task forces. To enlarge the circle further, 300 people were invited to a reception to learn about CORAL and sign up to have their voices heard.

"We brought together a very diverse group, which was our strength and yet kept us from moving along very fast," says Miller. "We were a group with differences in every way you can imagine– economic, ethnicity, experience, education. Coming from such different places and perceptions, it took us much longer to plan and make decisions. Sometimes it takes all this fumbling around together, making mistakes and learning from them, to build something that everyone is invested in. I think we're stronger because of it."

The process wasn't stress-free and tensions surfaced along the way, but CORAL Pasadena emerged from the process as a strong, cohesive group. A plan was created that was flexible, diverse and grassroots-based.

The plan called for CORAL Pasadena to focus on children in kindergarten through grade 12 who are not served by other community resources. Programming would involve families and caregivers in children's educational experience, and include the whole community by building on existing resources and making them broadly accessible at a variety of locations.

Pasadena chose to base CORAL programming in neighborhood centers in the Northwest Pasadena and West Altadena neighborhoods, while working with program providers in and outside those neighborhoods.

Northwest Pasadena is home to 19,000 young people under 21 years of age. The median household income there is $27,410 compared to $41,896 citywide. Because of a shortage of neighborhood schools, many children are bused to locations far from their homes.

No one knew what to expect at the Youth Institute. This summer we learned things we never knew before. Now we are able to make a **DIFFERENCE** not only in our life but in our school, our community and the rest of the **WORLD**.

— Student,
Pasadena Youth Institute

"We wanted to work with some of these neighborhood organizations who are out there doing heroic things for kids with minimal resources," says Miller. "These organizations really know the children and the families, know the community. All the talent is there and the goodwill is there. With some extra help and technical resources, they could do so much more."

In order to be flexible and responsive to other community initiatives, CORAL's programming would complement PasadenaLEARNS and capitalize on its existing frameworks, goals and standards.

Children enrolled in CORAL programs would agree to regular and consistent attendance. Sites would encourage this by providing ongoing parent education as well as programs and staffing of the highest quality.

Neighborhood-based organizations would provide a variety of core programs including both tutoring and academically enriching activities that appeal to young people, such as computer learning, Afro-Brazilian dance, the science of cooking, outdoor experiences in ecology and biology, drawing and painting, music and visits to gardens, libraries, museums and other cultural institutions. All sites would be well-equipped and wired for the latest technology.

"Kids need time to have fun and be kids, too," Miller explains. "We need to provide homework assistance, and we can be very creative in incorporating academic skills that kids need in other activities. You can do things very differently after school and still get improvement in skills and school achievement."

In June 2000, at the culmination of the year-long preplanning and planning process, CORAL Pasadena was awarded its first implementation grant. Those dollars were then regranted to 12 local program providers. Five neighborhood organizations were chosen to receive two-year implementation grants, and seven groups were awarded planning grants. All 12 were selected because they showed a deep commitment to working in partnership with the entire community to deliver high-quality educational programs to youth.

Ahead for CORAL Pasadena lie unimaginable adventures and challenges, and the excitement is building. In its first year of implementation, 200 children will be served, and Miller talks of doubling or increasing that number to 500 in 2002. One of the next steps will be forging a working relationship with the schools, which have not yet been formally linked to the CORAL process.

"We know it's not going to be an overnight success," Miller admits. "The Foundation has wisely made a commitment of seven years. It's going to take us seven years to figure all this out and be flexible enough that we can learn from year to year and change things as we go."

CORAL PASADENA 2001 GRANT RECIPIENTS

Implementation Grants

Alkebu-lan Cultural Center

Hillsides Altadena Family Center

Neighbors Acting Together Helping All (NATHA)

Neighborhood Urban Family Center (NUFC)

Students and Tutors Achieving Real Success (STARS)

Planning Grants

Boys and Girls Clubs of Pasadena

Bridging Resources in Technology and Education (BRITE)

Compassionate Heart Learning Center

El Centro de Acción Social

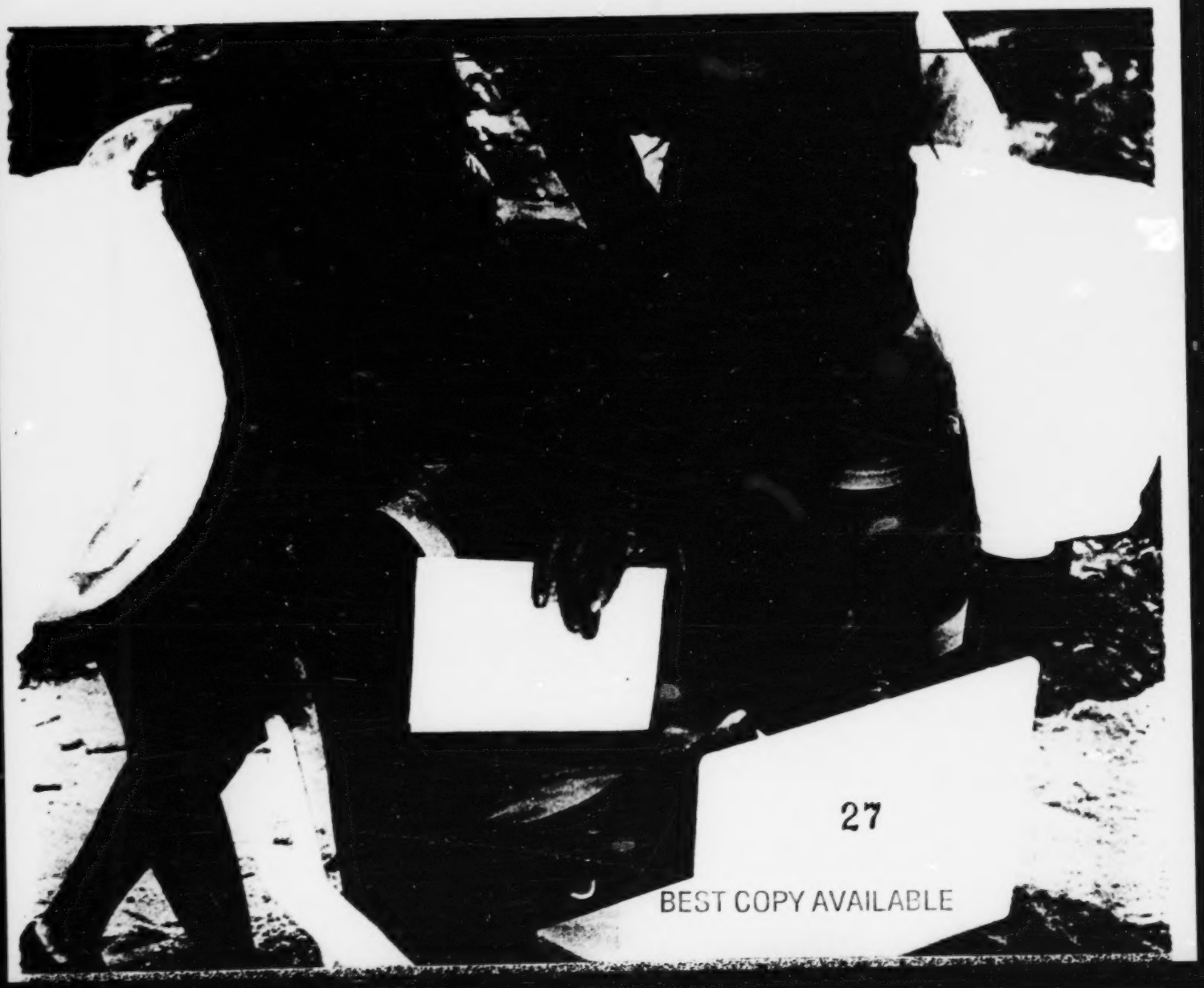
Harambee Christian Family Center

Mothers' Club Community Center

Sycamores Family Resource Center

community

Every member of a community can contribute to the success of the community's youth. By their involvement, they teach these young people to give back to their communities.



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community:

LONG BEACH

Long Beach is the southernmost city in Los Angeles County and known for being the home of the historic Queen Mary ocean liner as well as the stunning new Aquarium of the Pacific. Its gleaming downtown skyline is a vibrant symbol of the economic success of this seaside metropolis.

Like most of Southern California, Long Beach's sunny, eclectic neighborhoods have seen tremendous growth in population and diversity. Immigrants have streamed in from Mexico, Latin America and Southeast Asia, and more than 38 languages are spoken in the city. Schools, libraries and playgrounds are all visibly crowded.

Spurred by the City of Long Beach's new strategic plan, civic leaders are moving into action. The plan calls for a citywide focus on improving the well-being of youth and families, increasing the number of students meeting high academic standards and building a strong network of healthy, safe neighborhoods.

Population: 461,522

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The Story of Long Beach

The YMCA of Greater Long Beach, the oldest and largest organization serving youth and families in the city, was selected as CORAL's lead agency. The YMCA here operates 35 programs in seven branches and touches the lives of 26,000 children, adults and families. It has a plethora of partnerships and collaborations within the community, including close ties with the city's school system.

From the first, the YMCA believed that to impact children's learning success in Long Beach would require CORAL to work closely with the schools and base most of its programming at school sites.

"We believe the schools can become the hub of the community," explains Ralph Hurtado, Executive Director of CORAL Long Beach.

As preplanning got underway in January 2000, a leadership team was established to oversee the process. Information gathering began with a mail survey of youth-serving organizations followed by in-person interviews of nearly 100 individuals through 12 focus group sessions. Those interviewed included parents and activists from the Latino, African-American and Cambodian communities, as well as individuals from all levels of the school district.

What Long Beach learned was that elementary school children in all age groups were in need of services. Some schools - but not all – had several out-of-school programs, but these programs were isolated with little coordination or collaboration. Most programming was offered at schools in low-income neighborhoods, which meant that low-income children who are bused to schools in other areas were left out. Few programs stressed parent involvement or offered parent support such as English classes or technology training.

Armed with this information, the planning phase was launched in October with a three-day conference attended by 75 people including parents and representatives of schools and youth-serving agencies. At the retreat, participants heard the results of the preplanning phase, reviewed successful models, participated in team-building activities and developed consensus about what the key components of CORAL Long Beach should be.

"I went into the retreat thinking, 'Oh, gosh, I have so much to do, I can't spend three days in this room,' admits Kristine Wingert of the Camp Fire Boys and Girls. "But it was very worthwhile. A lot of good dialogue and conversation came out of that."

Participants agreed that CORAL should take a holistic approach to learning and youth development, and employ a variety of academic, yet engaging, programming options that included arts, field trips, sports and multicultural events. Programming would be linked with district content standards and individual school curriculum, while also acknowledging alternative learning styles (visual, kinetic, experiential) for children who have difficulty learning in the traditional school environment.

"To some extent, Long Beach schools offer their kids art and music but nothing like we wanted to do through CORAL," says Hurtado. "Low-income children tend to need a lot of enrichment and exposure to things like science and the arts."

CORAL programming would be open to all children attending the schools selected to be CORAL sites. Transportation would need to be provided for children who were bused from their neighborhoods to the school sites.

What CORAL wouldn't offer was babysitting. "Keeping kids off the streets during at-risk hours does not solve anything," explains Julie O'Donnell, CORAL Community Development Advisor and a professor at California State University, Long Beach. "We want to give kids the skills to be successful in school and life."

After the retreat, participants were organized into site teams, which continued fact-finding in their neighborhoods and ultimately created work plans for eight potential implementation sites. As part of the planning process, more focus groups were held and CORAL provided some focus-group training to help in the process.

Many meetings and consultations later, eight site plans were completed. The leadership team reviewed the plans and selected six sites to implement CORAL – five public schools and an intersession site.

Intersession, or between-session programming, is crucial because overcrowding in Long Beach requires many schools to operate year-round on a four-track or five-track scheduling system. At the intersession site, CORAL would provide 12 hours of enrichment programming a week to children who were currently off track. Site plans called for the participating students to reflect ethnic diversity, as well as diversity of skill or achievement levels. "We wanted our programming to serve the entire community of learners since all young people in low-income neighborhoods are at risk and need the enrichment that CORAL programs will provide," says Hurtado.

O'Donnell explains that high-achieving students need to participate in the program and serve as role models to low-achieving students. "Long Beach after-school programs are often remedial, resulting in a lack of role models for these kids," she notes. "If a kid doesn't hang out with at least some kids who think it's good or cool to do well in school, chances are he isn't going to do well either."

Staff training is an important issue, and both parents and teachers have been hired to participate. Weekly staff training is provided to team leaders at each site. At Willard Elementary School, Principal Julie Mendell reports, "Our teachers are excited about CORAL."

I don't particularly like acronyms but to me CORAL is a wonderful acronym because it really is about taking what's already in the **COMMUNITY** and finding a great packaging mechanism to deliver **EDUCATION** in the best possible way.

— Chris Burcham, Long Beach Public Librarian

30

CORAL Long Beach began implementation in October 2001 with 125 children at each of the six sites. A site director was hired at each site to coordinate the effort with the support of three or more youth-serving organizations. The public library is a key partner at every site.

At Patrick Henry Elementary School, for instance, the Camp Fire Boys and Girls is directing CORAL's out-of-school programming as well as coordinating the efforts of all other agencies, including a college mentoring and tutoring group called BLAST, the International Center of Education and Sports (ICES), Ocean Challenge and the library.

"This is exactly what I needed here. The process has been fabulous. Before we only had a Kids Club which provided day care for 60 neighborhood students for a fee," says Cecilia Camarino, Patrick Henry's principal. "Now we have a free program for 125 students, five days a week, that will help all of our students succeed. It's an enriched program that is connected to school standards. We also have family programming on Saturdays. Everything that happens after school here is part of CORAL."

CORAL Long Beach is now moving forward under the guidance of a new Governance Board, composed of a parent, agency and school representative from each site, plus representatives from the public library, Long Beach Museum of Art and The Aquarium of the Pacific. In addition, board members are being sought from the business and faith sectors of the community.

"I'm not naive. CORAL is ambitious and I know it's not without challenges," says Principal Mendell. "We are starting slowly, but so far the process has worked very well. I'm very excited about CORAL, and I'm trying to convey that excitement and enthusiasm to staff and community."

Six CORAL Long Beach sites are moving forward with programming implementation in 2001:

International Elementary School

Patrick Henry Elementary School

Stevenson YMCA Community School

Whittier Elementary School

Willard Elementary School

Intersession Site

relationships

Trusting relationships and a sense of belonging are vital to the development and future success of CORAL students.

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community:

SAN JOSE

Everyone knows the way to San Jose these days, in large part due to the city's unofficial position as the technology capital of the Silicon Valley.

As the third largest city in California and the 11th largest city in the United States, San Jose has moved out of the shadow of that well-known and hilly city to the north.

San Jose's orange groves and farmlands have all but disappeared, replaced by sprawling industrial parks rich in technology and a revitalized downtown. Its neighborhoods are also changing and today are rich in diversity, including a large Latino population, growing Vietnamese and Cambodian communities and many others.

San Jose is just as rich in caring and collaboration, with active citywide initiatives designed to improve neighborhoods and schools. All across these boundaries community leaders and organizations are coming together to help youth and families.

Population: 894,943

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The Story of San Jose

"Earth Investigators" is tonight's planned activity. Staff members from Children's Discovery Museum in downtown San Jose have already arrived and unloaded special kits. At 5:30 teachers and parent volunteers assemble in the school library to be trained in the mechanics of the evening's planned explorations.

By 6:30 the school's auditorium is buzzing as 400 children and parents stream in and begin taking part in this Family Science Night event. Over the next 90 minutes, each child will perform 10 different discovery tasks such as sorting soils from different areas of San Jose and recording differences in color, silt size and texture. Together parents and children will create three-dimensional maps and then conduct rain simulations to allow the children to see the effects of erosion and to learn the value of recycling and environmental stewardship.

Parents, teachers and children – all involved in a fascinating, hands-on learning experience, with the Children's Discovery Museum as the catalyst. That's exactly the kind of out-of-school education that CORAL San Jose hopes to encourage and expand.

"San Jose has tons of existing programs during the out-of-school hours," says Mara Wold, Director of CORAL San Jose. "We need to expand those that are effective and bring them into the communities that are most in need to try to make a difference there."

CORAL San Jose is targeting two communities: Washington and Fair.

Both communities are located within a few miles of each other in the area south of downtown San Jose. The two neighborhoods share many common challenges, including high rates of poverty and crime as well as growing diversity.

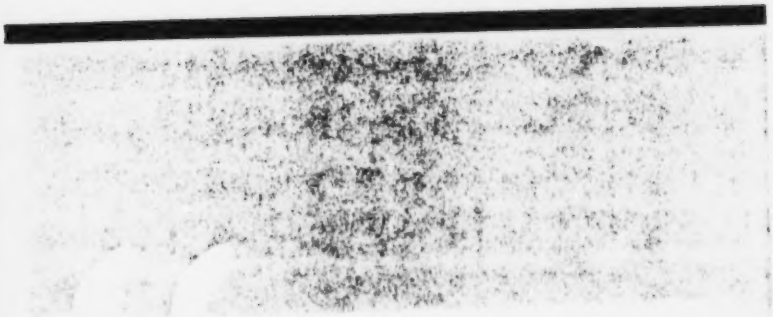
Washington is located within the San Jose Unified School District. The vast majority of residents are Latino immigrants. Youth here face many difficult choices considering the high rate of generational gang activity and teenage pregnancy.

In response to advocacy efforts by a powerful neighborhood organization, the City of San Jose has provided resources to improve the quality of life in Washington, including building a new public library, La Biblioteca Latinoamericana, and the Washington United Youth Center, a teen center managed by Catholic Charities YES (Youth Empowered for Success). Both the youth center and the Biblioteca are sources of great pride in the Washington community.

The Fair community is located a few miles southeast of Washington and is a part of the Franklin McKinley School District, which in turn is part of San Jose's Eastside. Fair is a densely populated neighborhood of Latino, Vietnamese and Cambodian families, and many have limited English proficiency.

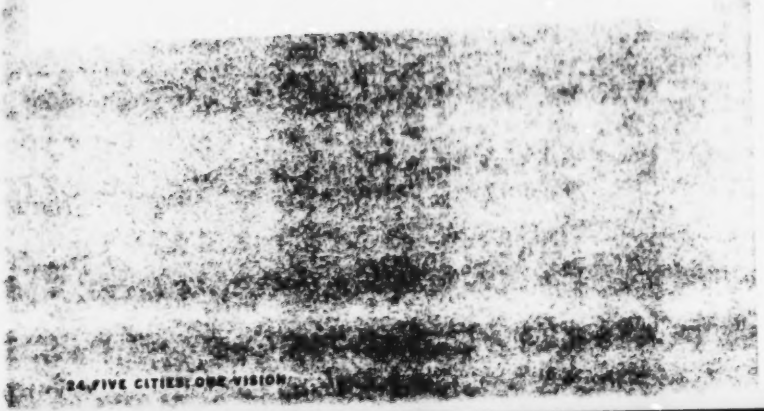
Both Washington and Fair are densely populated areas where residents lack access to affordable housing, health care and employment with livable wages. Many residents are migrant workers subject to seasonal lay-offs. Parents here often work multiple low-paying jobs and struggle to provide for their family's basic needs. These economic and linguistic barriers limit parental involvement in the schools. The Fair area is organizing a regional Parent-Teachers Association that will involve parents from all feeder schools.

"We need to continue to encourage parents to become involved in their children's education and provide them with opportunities to educate themselves and become leaders in the communities," Wold says.



CORAL has tapped into our **PASSION**. In social services you know you're doing good work but you're really hungry to demonstrate a lasting effect. CORAL is a truly **UNIQUE** opportunity to have a chance to do something that can be sustained over time.

— Diane Saign,
Catholic Charities, San Jose



Catholic Charities, the lead agency for CORAL San Jose, has been actively serving young people in both Fair and Washington since 1993 through its youth services division, known as YES. YES has over 60 bilingual, bicultural staff members with expertise in working with Latino and Vietnamese youth and families.

"I think CORAL has a tremendous vision and is very meaningful for our community, because there are so many people here who care about youth and education," says Diane Saign, CEO of Catholic Charities. "The Foundation is making a long-term commitment that has an evaluation model built into it, and there will be learning that can be disseminated and replicated."

Catholic Charities YES began the CORAL preplanning phase by developing a leadership team to focus the CORAL effort. That team compiled information and mapped services and resources in Fair and Washington around demographics and out-of-school programming.

Results showed that academic achievement of youth in these neighborhoods is extremely low in the areas of reading, writing and math. In Washington, only 18% of all youth attending high school graduate. For over 70% of youth and their families, English is a second language.

The amount and quality of after-school programming varies. Washington Elementary School and Fair Middle School both have up to 25 existing service providers and a myriad of other resources; other area schools and community locations have little to none. Most academic assistance at area schools is confined to tutoring low performers.

"We have a disconnect between school staff and service providers who conduct after-school programs," says Wold. "We hope that CORAL will provide a venue where teachers, school staff and

In each community the vision of what CORAL should and can be continues to drive the process forward.

agency representatives will come together to make a concerted effort to collectively identify and plan around common goals."

In June 2000, Catholic Charities YES began to mobilize the two communities by introducing 50 key community leaders to CORAL at a lunch held at San Jose's acclaimed Tech Museum.

Then the planning process began in earnest. Working groups were formed in each community, with neighborhood parents, youth and school representatives working together to develop a plan for CORAL San Jose. Focus groups of teachers and youth, ages 11 to 17, were asked for their views on what must be done to increase educational success in the two communities.

Based on the information received, CORAL San Jose developed a strategic plan for out-of-school programming. When CORAL San Jose begins implementation in spring 2002, programming will focus on youth who are in kindergarten through eighth grade and on youth at risk of failing in school, but will also support youth who are already doing well.

Says Saign, "We see San Jose as following a neighborhood-centric model – but within that model having the option of locating programs at churches, libraries, museums and youth centers as well as at schools."

Jenni Martin from Children's Discovery Museum adds: "I see a lot of potential for CORAL. The museum spends a lot of time thinking about how we can provide great experiences for children and encourage them to be better learners. CORAL will allow us to expand on what we do and increase the ways we bring programs out into the community."

leadership

Learning to lead and become assets to their communities are two of the most important life lessons that CORAL can provide the young people who participate in its programming.

community:

FRESNO

Fresno may once have been a sleepy farming town along Highway 99 in the San Joaquin Valley, but now only the geography remains the same. Today Fresno is the sixth largest city in California, a bustling urban center with a population as big and diverse as many of the state's major coastal cities.

This Sun Belt boomtown is a vital part of the "other California," the sunny interior cities scattered up and down the Great Central Valley. In spite of its growth, at its core Fresno remains family-oriented and strongly religious, with a faith community that has expanded to include mosques and Buddhist temples.

A new spirit of collaboration is sweeping through city streets as community and faith leaders come together to tackle problems caused by rapid population growth and urbanization. Already this collaboration has led to Fresno's 2000 designation as an All American City.

Population: 427,652

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The Story of Fresno

All over Fresno, conversations are taking place - intense, spirited conversations about community and collaboration, about positive change and ways to foster the academic achievement of children.

Those conversations were initiated by two local champions of change: the United Way of Fresno County and One by One Leadership. Together these two organizations are partnering as the lead agencies for CORAL in Fresno.

Now a new voice is leading the discussion, the voice of CORAL Fresno, Inc. This not-for-profit corporation was created in the summer of 2000 at the behest of the two lead agencies to manage CORAL Fresno and keep it moving forward.

As in the other four communities, Fresno's CORAL is committed to seeking significant – even dramatic – and measurable improvement in academic performance in schools by changing out-of-school factors.

Community discussions seemed a logical place to get started. As part of the preplanning process for CORAL Fresno, many hours of community conversations took place with parents, teachers and community leaders from nonprofit, faith-based, school and grassroots organizations. The purpose of these talks was to build awareness and support for CORAL Fresno as well as to discover the perceptions, attitudes and thoughts of stakeholders likely to influence the direction and success of the project.

Even before CORAL, United Way and One by One Leadership had been conversing and collaborating together on projects for almost five years. "We have a deep working relationship that is respectful and trusting," says Rich Kriegbaum, President, United Way of Fresno County.

Fresno's United Way raises funds through private donations and 260 workplace campaigns for the benefit of 73 endorsed organizations, serving as nexus of community building relationships, processes and programs in Greater Fresno. One by One Leadership, formerly known as Fresno Leadership Foundation, was formed in 1994 and today serves as an advocate for inside-out, self-determined community development.

"Both organizations want to see changed neighborhoods out of which will come sustained changes in education," says H. Spees, Chief Executive Officer of One by One.

Changed neighborhoods and improved learning are both important issues for Fresno. "Fresno went through a demographic transformation with huge numbers of immigrants settling here over the past 10 years. We found our town turning into a city – and a city that was losing its soul," says Spees. "It became a crisis here because there was a lack of collaborative civic leadership."

But the tide has turned and in the last few years there's been a renaissance in leadership in Fresno. "Government, business and clergy have come together, and we have a shared vision that we didn't have five years ago," Spees says.

Because Fresno is a notably religious community, faith-based collaboration is especially important here. That, too, is happening, and a network of 150 congregations of various denominations has been formed – not with a political agenda or missionary zeal, but with a deep commitment to the personal and social transformation of disenfranchised neighborhoods and families in Fresno.

CORAL Fresno is targeting two areas within the city: West Fresno and Tehipite.

Located south and west of the downtown area, West Fresno has seven elementary schools within its boundaries. Among its 35,044 residents, those of Hispanic origin are in the majority here and account for 61% of residents, followed by African Americans at 25%, Asian/Pacific Islanders at 8%, Caucasians at 5% and American Indians at 1%. These numbers represent a significant increase in the Hispanic population and corresponding declines in African-American and Caucasian residents over the past 10 years.

The Tehipite pyramid covers downtown urban Fresno and includes five elementary schools. This area is home to 32,317 people of which 59% are Hispanic, 21% Caucasian, 13% Asian/Pacific Islander and 7% African-American.

Both Tehipite and West Fresno are grappling with some tough social issues, but the City of Fresno and numerous community partners are currently working on a revitalization master plan for the downtown Fresno area. Projects in progress include a minor league baseball park and expansion of the community hospital. Several home rehab projects are also underway.

During the preplanning or mapping process, CORAL Fresno learned that some schools have fairly extensive out-of-school offerings, often supplemented by state and federal funding. Others have few programs or resources to offer, but expressed a high degree of interest in building capacity.

The City of Fresno Parks and Recreation Department and non-profit organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs provide the bulk of existing out-of-school educational programming. A number of Fresno schools offer an extended-day program for students at risk of being retained at grade level. The California Department of Education's After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Program and the United States Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program have provided many Fresno schools with financial resources to operate school-based after-school programs, and there is great potential for future joint efforts.

With so much work ahead, CORAL Fresno is keeping its options open and has begun the process of connecting with school, community and city collaborative efforts. CORAL Fresno is

CORAL is a conversation – a multi-city **CONVERSATION** about best practices and learning that is very powerful. It's not just about a **COMMUNITY**, but a community of communities creating positive change.

— Kurt Madden, One by One Leadership, Fresno

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Out-of-school education can make a powerful difference in children's lives by providing chances for young people to grow, develop and continue learning.

concentrating on providing an inclusive, authentic, relationship-driven community building and planning process that is firmly embedded in the structures and culture of the targeted neighborhoods.

Community conversations are continuing, and meetings are being held. Roy Mendiola, CORAL Fresno's executive director, and his community developers expect to hold hundreds of conversations and meetings in West Fresno and Tehipite. "We will listen and respond to the heartbeat and wisdom in the community throughout the planning and implementation process," Mendiola says.

Developing community capacity is the most essential and critical component for the success of CORAL in both the short- and the long-term. Yet CORAL Fresno is understandably committed to not drawing premature conclusions about how implementation will unfold.

"We want the schools to be partners with us, but this is clearly an out-of-school program," says Kriegbaum. "It's quite possible that none of the programming will be done on school sites. We don't know all of the answers yet," adds Spees.

What is clear is that CORAL requires community participation at all levels. The Board of Directors for CORAL Fresno, Inc. was formed from members of the two lead organizations, but the large, new governance body being formed must take on the character of the two communities. CORAL Fresno continues to search West Fresno and Tehipite for leaders "who have the will, desire and stamina to stay with this process," adds Spees. "We're looking for people who have a heart for this."

The two agencies regard the CORAL funds provided by the Foundation as both a gift to Fresno, for which they are grateful, and an investment in Fresno, for which they must and will provide a return. Says Kriegbaum, "Our hope is that seven years from now, whatever CORAL Fresno has become will be self-sustaining."

innovation

Oh, what fun we had! Creating, learning and doing can help build a child's knowledge and self-confidence.

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community:

SACRAMENTO

Politics, power and people. Sacramento has them all in abundance, due to its undisputed position as California's capitol city and center stage for public policy in the nation's largest state.

Located in the midst of the state's agricultural heartland, Sacramento is known as the city of trees. The "River City," founded at the point where the majestic Sacramento River meets the fast-moving American River, is also an important transportation hub where waterways, highways and railways converge.

The pace is less than frenetic in Sacramento's leafy neighborhoods, but a lot happens here. Education is a top concern of both neighborhood advocates and civic leaders, and they are working together in ways that other urban areas might envy.

Population 407,018

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The Story of Sacramento

Nowhere is the power of relationships more apparent than in Sacramento. Collaboration is a mantra here in the fifth community to be selected as a CORAL site.

Like Fresno, the CORAL Sacramento effort has been launched as a partnership between two very different agencies that have united to work together as a tightly knit team: The Center for Fathers and Families and the Sacramento Children's Home.

Sacramento Children's Home is a large organization with community programs throughout greater Sacramento. With a long history of serving the city's children since 1867, the agency has created many partnerships with other service providers, community residents, government officials and business leaders.

By contrast, the Center for Fathers and Families is a small, grassroots agency founded only seven years ago but rapidly growing in clout under the charismatic leadership of Rick Jennings. Jennings is a community activist and current president of the Sacramento City Unified School District's school board.

"Sacramento does a really great job of working together in a collaborative fashion," says Jennings. "The political climate is very cooperative. But in spite of all of the collaborations and partnerships, we still need to improve and do things differently, especially in schools that are not performing. We must change things in a strategic way so that out-of-school education can accelerate academic achievement."

Already Jennings and Lisa King, Assistant Director of Community Services for the Children's Home, have developed terrific synergy in their joint quest to accelerate learning for Sacramento's children.

Together they completed the preplanning phase of CORAL, identifying resources, assets, opportunities, needs and gaps in services. Two communities were chosen as CORAL's target neighborhoods: North Sacramento and Meadowview.

To engage and excite stakeholders in these areas, a kick-off luncheon was held in May 2001. More than 100 stakeholders attended.

"There's a lot for CORAL to build on here," says Bina Lefkovitz, a local CORAL consultant. "All of the major players and resources are out there, they just need to be tapped."

Jennings and King have been busy tapping them, interviewing key people in North Sacramento and Meadowview including residents, youth, business leaders, neighborhood advocates, elected officials, and representatives from schools, cultural institutions and both public and private organizations.

North Sacramento lies north across the American River from central Sacramento and is home to around 50,000 people, including large Hmong and Lao populations. The median income here is $21,615 compared to a countywide average of $38,846. Many residents face language and education challenges that are serious barriers to assimilation and employment.

"We are a very diverse community with a lot of proud, impoverished people," says Dennis Tillet, Superintendent of the North Sacramento School District.

The district serves more than 5,500 students in 10 elementary schools, and 27 different languages are spoken at home here, including Spanish, Hmong, Lao, Ukrainian and Russian.

North Sacramento is blessed with an award-winning school system. The school district also operates a child development program providing before- and after-school childcare services as well as offering preschool classes at eight sites. In the fall of 2001, the district began a pilot program in which they manage a formerly city-run after-school program called START.

"We have operated outstanding before- and after-care for children at a low- or no-cost fee-basis for 25 years, but with lots of restrictions imposed," explains Tillet. "In our area we have a lot of low-income families that don't qualify for no-fee childcare, and they get left out of the loop."

Superintendent Tillet views CORAL as an avenue to student enrichment, with the school district responsible for the hard academics. "With CORAL, I envision having a lot of different pieces of enrichment before and after school and during the summer. I can imagine a multitude of things we could do to bring the schools back as the focal point of the community, like getting our computer labs open to the community at large," says Tillett.

Many North Sacramento parents, especially new immigrants, are unfamiliar with the American school culture or the value of activities like Girl Scouts or ballet lessons. "We need to take cultural differences into account," says Lisa King. "What we've found is that every parent wants their children to be smarter, to do well in school. CORAL will be an avenue to help parents make the connection between academics and enrichment."

Meadowview is a suburban outpost south of the downtown area. Its population of 17,000 is almost equally balanced: 32% the residents are Caucasian, 23% are Southeast Asian, 23% are African-American and 21% are Latino.

A drive through Meadowview reveals many well-tended homes and gardens. Yet many residents are economically challenged, with the median income here equal to $25,205; only 27% of the population has a high school diploma. In some areas crime and substance abuse remain persistent problems, but everyday people throughout Meadowview are fighting to make the streets safer, and improvements are visible.

Meadowview's nine elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school are part of the Sacramento City Unified School District, where Jennings serves as school board president.

"Schools in this area have multiple interventions," says Jim Sweeney, Superintendent of the Sacramento City Unified School District. "It's very challenging to control." Sweeney wants to see better alignment between the schools and out-of-school programming so that it becomes a relatively seamless experience for young people.

I can still remember as if it were yesterday when my uncle told me 'You have so much **GREATNESS** in you.' It meant so much to me, it changed my whole life. I needed that boost to my **SELF-ESTEEM** so desperately, just like all our kids do. To me, success for CORAL would be to find that potential, that greatness in each of our kids.

— Rick Jennings, Lead Agency

45

Nature, technology, even games can serve as tools to enrich and accelerate academic achievement.

To be successful, Sweeney believes that CORAL needs to provide:

1. A very clear set of agreed-upon outcomes – a consensus on what students should know or be able to do or be like as a result of this program;
2. A school by school examination of what types of activities, programs, or approaches will ensure that those outcomes are met; and
3. A plan identifying the specific ways that schools and CORAL can work together to achieve those outcomes.

Involving local faith-based organizations is another key component to increasing youth-serving capacity in Meadowview, says Jennings. "We don't have a lot of organizations here, but we do have more than 25 churches. We have to figure out how to involve faith-based organizations and get them to play a larger role than they have in the past," he insists.

Governance is the next critical issue for CORAL Sacramento. "As we move to the next stage, governance will allow us to involve the community and build capacity," Jennings explains. "It takes the individual out of the equation, and it becomes a group making decisions. We have to involve the community and let the community decide on what will work here."

Jennings believes there are advantages to being the fifth community selected as a CORAL site. "We get to watch how each of the others have done it, and use that, so our system can be smoother," he says. "We get to see everything – how they brought the community together, how they conducted focus groups, how they established their advisory committees and how they involved parents. Learning from them allows us to avoid a lot of mistakes along the way."

In North Sacramento, Superintendent Tillet is looking forward to having CORAL programming in his district. "I want to be able to sit down and talk and think outside the box," he emphasizes. "We're going to be collaborating in ways that are not just good for the schools, but good for the whole community."

YOUTH INSTITUTE

The morning mist is just beginning to melt away and the scent of white and purple sage is heavy in the air. In the distance a flock of yellow-rumped warblers can be heard, while here on the ground the eager voices of a troop of 35 teenagers ring out.

Armed with video cameras and laptop computers equipped with satellite uplinks to the Internet, these young people are scattering throughout the woods, meadow and lake ecosystems that make up Long Beach's El Dorado Nature Center. The video footage is destined to become part of a 45-minute documentary they will create, while the laptops are needed to help these amateur naturalists categorize plant and animal species they will encounter here.

Meanwhile, in Pasadena 40 teenagers are busy constructing a scale model of an ancient Egyptian civilization. Over a six-week period they build an ancient home from mud and bricks, learn hieroglyphics, grow papyrus and make paper, and write about it all on a Web site they create themselves. In the process of their immersion into Egyptology, they acquire hands-on knowledge of photography, computer graphics, art appreciation, math, communications and journaling, archeology, ancient religions and leadership skills.

All of these high school youth were participating in the CORAL Youth Institute, where high school-age youth apply to spend a summer in an enriched environment and then pass on what they've learned to other, younger children in their communities.

The CORAL youth institutes were conceived as a way to engage high school students, giving them much needed academic enrichment, work experience and community involvement. The concept was created to serve as a "ladder of opportunity" where older youth learn skills and then pass on that knowledge to younger children enrolled in CORAL programs.

Since most of these teenagers must find paid employment during the summer, the youth institute participants receive a $1,000 stipend. Teenagers are expected to attend every day of the institute, be on time and ready to put in a full day "on the job." Once the institute ends, these youth continue to give back to their communities by participating in CORAL programs in a variety of ways, such as tutoring and mentoring younger children.

In June 2000 the first youth institute was launched in Pasadena. For six weeks, 33 teenagers learned by doing, and they did everything from learning teamwork from an Outward Bound-type course to planting a garden, creative writing and becoming Web wizards in the center's new computer lab.

"We took some risks and came up with a good model," says Michael Brown, Pasadena's Youth Institute Director.

"They had a fabulous experience - they have become our best ambassadors for CORAL," agrees Lorna Miller, OCC Director.

The word was out and 120 teenagers applied for only 40 slots in Pasadena's 2001 institute, so Miller is hoping to schedule two sessions in 2002. The OCC director adds, "My dream would be to hold five youth institutes in Pasadena – each with a different emphasis, like writing or astronomy, and let the kids decide which one they would attend."

In the summer of 2001 Long Beach created its own academic youth institute with a technology twist. It started with a wilderness retreat that sent 35 teenage boys and girls into the mountains to build camp sites, hike in the woods, learn orienteering and map reading, and culminated in team-building on a monumental scale. "The group developed a close-knit and caring attitude – so close that Youth Institute Director Bob Cabeza says "They became more like a family than a class. It was magical, the trust they had in each other."

"HOW DO WE MAKE THE AMERICAN DREAM REAL FOR DISENFRANCHISED KIDS IN A COMMUNITY? CORAL TAKES A VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL APPROACH THAT IS UNIQUELY MATCHED TO WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY."

lead agency

lead agency

"CORAL INVITES YOUTH AND FAMILIES TO IMAGINE NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES."

The Youth Institute **TAUGHT** us to be on time and come prepared if you want to learn. At the wilderness **RETREAT** we learned that no matter what we look like on the outside, deep down we're the same.

— Student,
Long Beach Youth Institute

This family-like atmosphere is even more amazing given the intentionally diverse make-up of the group, which included boys and girls who are Filipino, Latino, Cambodian, Indian, Vietnamese, African-American and Caucasian. Many were inner-city youth with heartrending family backgrounds, and one boy was a former gang member.

"The experience was a real eye-opener for some of them," Cabeza notes. "They learned to accept and care about kids that they wouldn't normally even talk to back in their own high schools."

Back from the mountains, the Long Beach teenagers spent the remaining seven weeks taking to technology "like ducks to water" and learning how to use scanners, the Sherlock search engine, creating personal journals on encrypted Web sites and using Illustrator software to create team logos and other graphics. More project-based learning followed – diversity training at the Museum of Tolerance, art appreciation at the Getty Center and marine biology research at the Aquarium of the Pacific's tidepools. College preparedness was emphasized in a day-long visit to the California State University at Long Beach campus.

Coordinators' and teachers' assessments of the youth were very positive. They applauded them for their work ethic, their high level of camaraderie, and their achievements in completing multiple projects. This analysis of the Long Beach and Pasadena youth institutes has left the other three CORAL sites eager to incorporate the concept into their site plans. Fresno and San Jose will launch their first youth institutes in the summer of 2002.

9 PRINCIPLES OF THE YOUTH INSTITUTE

1. Every CORAL community will incorporate a Youth Institute to engage high school students.

2. The Institute will begin with an intensive summer program and continue throughout the year on a regular basis.

3. The Institute must have an academic focus, including a project-based learning approach. Academic goals must be clearly articulated for all activities.

4. Technology training must be an integral aspect of the Institute and all necessary equipment provided to participating students.

5. Participants must be entering 9th to 12th grade and chosen through a competitive application process.

6. Institute graduates are expected to perform community service (e.g. tutoring, mentoring, technology) at local CORAL sites throughout the school year.

7. Students receive a stipend for their participation and also are compensated for the time they devote to CORAL sites throughout the year.

8. Staff to student ratios must be appropriate so that each young person can develop a meaningful relationship with a caring adult.

9. The initial summer program must be evaluated against a clearly defined set of desired outcomes related to changes in skills, attitudes and behaviors of participants.

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THE ROLE OF THE FOUNDATION

In addition to providing grants, the Foundation is working directly with the lead organizations at each site. Arranging a sequential roll-out in the five communities has allowed Foundation staff to meet frequently with individuals, committees and groups at each site, raising relevant issues, sharing information and discussing lessons learned.

The Foundation also has worked to build a more structured and supportive infrastructure to guide the CORAL communities. To develop this framework, Irvine undertook several key activities:

Mapping the theory and logic of CORAL. Additional information on this can be found in the section, "Evaluating CORAL" on page 40.

Building a high-caliber team of expert consultants to help in the planning and implementation process. These consultants, whose work covers curriculum, assessment, communications, technology and research, provide valuable support to the local communities as well as to the larger CORAL development processes. A list of consultants is provided on page 50.

Linking CORAL to other Foundation initiatives. The Foundation has launched a related Museum Youth Initiative (MYI) to improve the capacity of California museums to provide educational programs and work with youth. Other initiatives are being explored.

Creating a Web site. CORAL Connect serves as an active tool for educational enrichment, for building community and as an information clearing house.

The Foundation has organized a National Advisory Committee to provide CORAL communities with access to national models, strategies and expertise. These advisors also serve as an important channel for sharing the lessons of CORAL outside California. A list of the national committee members is on page 50.

The Foundation's aim is to build a learning community within the five sites that will build on each other's strengths, and allow communities to share their challenges and accomplishments in a meaningful forum.

A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

Building organizational capacity and community-wide programming often requires a little more than help from friends and volunteers. At times, specialized knowledge and technical resources are essential. The Foundation has acknowledged this need from the very beginning by giving local community partners access to consultants in technology, research, curriculum, communications and evaluation. These consultants will work with the lead agencies, program providers and board members in each city throughout the life of the CORAL Initiative.

In addition, technical assistance and consultant services are available for team building, diversity training, governance and other areas suggested or requested by each city.

Technology

Technology is a major component of CORAL, not an afterthought, and has been planned for from the very beginning of the project. CORAL communities are harnessing the power of technology in three specific areas: learning, communications and capacity building.

Computers and access to the Internet provide tremendous opportunities to reinforce reading, math and writing skills, as well as to complete homework and school assignments that focus on researching and writing reports. Better yet, they do it in a way that children regard as fun and engaging. Technology can be the key to students' success in school and future endeavors.

The CORAL program is opening doors so that more students can satisfy their hunger to become proficient in technology. All CORAL sites are already using, or will use, the latest technology in ways that enhance academic skills. No slow or outdated equipment will be used; instead, high-speed Internet access and modern machines with video capability and state-of-the-art software will help narrow the "digital divide" for CORAL children and youth.

Already, implementation sites in Pasadena and Long Beach have received a number of new I-Macs and a fully-equipped computer lab is located in the CORAL Pasadena building. The Youth Institutes in those cities have acquired and put into action both desktop computers with video capability and laptops with satellite downlinks, as well as a varied set of software tools that promote creativity and self-expression.

CORAL also is using technology to encourage people to communicate in new and more productive ways. A comprehensive Web site, CORAL Connect (www.coralconnect.org), has been developed to facilitate the exchange and communication of information across and within sites. This Web site acts not as a hub or spoke, but as a wheel that links and supports the sharing of experiences and interactive educational resources as well as allowing the personalization of those resources. Young people have access to message boards and email accounts and a range of different educational materials, while program providers and local leaders are able to connect, share resources and discuss issues and ideas.

The capacity-building aspect of technology revolves around providing effective systems and high-tech productivity tools for management, budgeting and other administrative tasks. In addition, a management information system is being designed to capture data about CORAL participants that will inform program providers as they plan and implement educationally-enriched programs in their communities.

Communications

Communications is an essential tool for building community and is inextricably linked to technology. In a project with the scope of CORAL, keeping everyone informed about process and progress is a huge challenge. Communicating both within and across the five communities requires sharing of information and resources at all levels.

Each community is developing its own method for sharing key information with local stakeholders and decision makers. In Long Beach, for example, a monthly informational newsletter is mailed to a list of 180 stakeholders. All CORAL Long Beach staff members are bilingual and all meetings – including advisory board, governance board, planning, and school site meetings – are conducted in both Spanish and English.

Because so many community members and organizations are involved in CORAL, the lead agencies work hard to keep local efforts from becoming scattered or disjointed. Indeed, being clear on the mission and purpose of CORAL and communicating that in many languages to many constituents is critical; holding frequent, accessible and inclusive meetings are an important part of that process.

The communications consulting team provides methods and models for sharing information within and across the communities and providing strategic linkages that help build sustained relationships. The team has created a communications "tool kit" along with a glossary of terms to assist CORAL community members. They also are responsible for the development of a quarterly online newsletter, CORAL Communique, which gives CORAL users news, important resources and informative interviews, and provides ongoing technical assistance to the five CORAL communities.

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Curriculum

CORAL's out-of-school programming must complement and reinforce the curriculum in local schools if the project is to succeed in improving academic achievement within schools.

Curriculum is defined as the course of study in a school. The California State Board of Education has adopted core academic content frameworks for kindergarten through grade 12 in four curriculum areas: reading and language arts, history and social science, mathematics and science. The curriculum specifies what topics are taught at each grade level and builds from grade to grade. Students learn about numbers, for instance, before they learn how to add.

Each of the five communities has access to CORAL's curriculum consultant who is familiar with state and national standards and can make recommendations on appropriate activities and resources. In addition, the sites are working or will work closely with local schools, in some cases hiring teachers and school principals as curriculum advisors.

In one CORAL program, youth created a mural. The young people looked at the books and software *Talking Walls: The Stories Continue*, written by Margy Burns Knight and Anne Sibley O'Brien. The youth learned about walls – from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to The Great Wall of China. Young people broke into groups and each group studied different walls by doing research in books and on the Internet. Some groups studied murals that had been painted on walls in their own community. Each group created a multimedia presentation about their wall. Then the whole group decided to create a mural that reflected the cultural diversity in their community. They went into the community and interviewed people to get background information before creating the mural. They created a small drawing of their mural, which they then enlarged to a giant mural. When the mural was finished, they planned a celebration where they invited members of the community to see their mural. History, art and science were all connected to the curriculum.

Research

CORAL relies on practical research to guide the programs, which has been supplied by Blueprint Research and Design. All CORAL sites have incorporated research into their site strategies. Lead agencies, local programs and the Foundation staff have used research briefs on youth engagement, technology and learning, after-school programs and capacity building to guide their planning and program design. In addition to research briefs that are shared by all five communities, individual sites have used local

There's something so **NEW** and fresh about CORAL's approach that is **ENERGIZING** people. We're all very hopeful and positive.

— Claire Lachance, CORAL San Jose

data, asset mapping and university colleagues to provide research on community demographics, program locations, transportation issues and local school board policies.

As CORAL programs get underway in the five communities, the National Advisory Committee and research consultants will continue to provide research findings to the initiative. At the same time, the experiences and lessons learned in CORAL sites will be available to inform the field of research.

EVALUATING CORAL

In the past, community-based initiatives have proven troublesome to evaluate. One effective method for charting progress of large community-based projects is through the use of a logic model.

A logic model provides a simplified roadmap of a particular program initiative, highlighting how it is expected to work, what activities need to come before others and how desired outcomes are to be achieved.

CORAL's model is based on a "Theory of Change" created by the Foundation. This Theory of Change is based on the premise that academic achievement will be improved through a combination of community-level changes. (An explanation on page 43. provides a snapshot of the theory for the CORAL Initiative.)

In the long term, CORAL's goal is to have an impact on the academic achievement of participating students through capacity building and resource coordination at the community and organization levels. Accomplishing this long-term goal requires successfully achieving a series of short-term and intermediate outcomes.

In the short term, CORAL needs to produce a sustainable network of local programs providing high-quality educational activities that are coordinated with and complementary to the school curriculum. Building on that sustainable network, CORAL must then realize the following interim outcomes:

- Children, youth and families must have knowledge of and access to this network of out-of-school educational programs – and make use of them.
- As a result, children and youth must develop the behaviors, attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for academic success
- Families must be supportive of their children's academic progress and willing to act as advocates for improving both the quality of schools and out-of-school educational supports.
- Children can acquire an ongoing relationship with a consistent, caring adult or supplement other relationships through CORAL programs.

An evaluation team from Menlo Park-based SRI International and its Center for Education and Human Services is already in place to assess progress and results. This team has identified several data-collection methods to document the changes CORAL is expected to produce and track how the model's assumptions hold or do not hold as the project unfolds. The evaluation will use a variety of indicators for measuring academic achievement. Indicators will include program staff and classroom teacher reports and ratings, grades, scores on standardized achievement tests, students' ratings of themselves and the percentage of students advancing to the next grade. The data from the evaluation will be fed back regularly to the local communities to assist them in improving their programming for children and youth.

California and the nation are in search of models that will work and will improve educational outcomes for children. If the CORAL model proves successful, the lessons learned will communicate powerful messages to educators, policymakers, parents and other communities.

"I SEE OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME AS HOURS OF OPPORTUNITY. INSTEAD OF LOOKING AT THEM IN A NEGATIVE WAY, LET'S TAKE THOSE SAME HOURS AND CHALLENGE KIDS. LET'S GIVE THEM THE BEST EXPERIENCES THEY'VE NEVER HAD - GIVE THEM CHANCES TO ACHIEVE, HAVE FUN, AND EXPAND THEIR CREATIVITY."

lead agency

student

"I LIKED THE FACT THAT WE GOT TO USE A LOT OF SOFTWARE THAT PEOPLE OUR AGE WOULDN'T NORMALLY GET TO USE."

the future

CORAL is a journey just beginning,
an experiment still taking shape.

What this ambitious initiative will achieve
remains ahead.

Yet one thing is already clear:
changes are occurring in the five CORAL cities.
These five communities are
Organizing Resources to Advance Learning.
In each community, the hope, energy,
passion and dedication are tangible.

The vision burns bright.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Community-based initiatives have proven challenging to evaluate. Standard evaluation practices do not lend themselves well to complex community-based initiatives where it is difficult to identify a single, simple cause-effect relationship. One effective method for charting progress toward interim and long-term outcomes of large-scale, community-based initiatives is through the development and use of a program logic model. A program logic model provides a roadmap of a particular program initiative, highlighting how it is expected to work, what activities need to come before others and how desired outcomes are to be achieved. The program logic model therefore offers a promising approach to evaluating the CORAL initiative.

This document describes the program logic model of the CORAL initiative. The figure on pages 46 and 47 is a picture of how the CORAL activities are expected to produce the projected short- and long-term outcomes and what the assumptions are behind this theory.

Long-Term Outcome

The long-term outcome of CORAL is improved academic achievement of children and youth, depicted in the box on the far right (**Box P**). The theory underlying CORAL is that the program initiative will ultimately have an impact at the individual level (i.e., students) through capacity-building and resource coordination at the community and organization levels. The CORAL evaluation team is currently advising program staff on the identification of clear and appropriate indicators for measuring achievement of this outcome. The final selection of indicators will take into account the state of measurement in the field and the feasibility, timing and costs of data collection. Since each community will be specifying the target age of students to benefit from CORAL activities, some indicators will apply across all sites, while others will need to be grade- or age-specific. Examples of measures of improved academic achievement of children and youth under consideration are as follows:

- Scores on standardized achievement tests (SAT-9)
- College application rates
- Percentage of graduates passing all courses required for admission to the University of California or California State University systems
- Average scores of juniors and seniors who took the verbal and math portions of the SAT tests
- Percentage of seniors participating in the SAT test
- Teacher reports and ratings
- Percentage of students advancing to the next grade
- Students receiving school scholarships, awards or honors.

In order to better understand how Irvine's investments in CORAL will contribute to the achievement of this program goal, the discussion below walks us through each component of the CORAL program model, beginning with program inputs and planning and on down the chain, feeding into the goal of improved academic achievement.

Program Inputs and the Planning Process

The CORAL program begins with the identification of communities by the Foundation. Communities identified as participants in the CORAL initiative will be determined to have certain readiness characteristics, including a sufficient number of providers of out-of-school programs, a school district interested in change and other characteristics (**Box A**). Once identified, these communities will be provided with various kinds of support, including a grant and technical assistance (also **Box A**). They will undertake preplanning and planning processes to select a target age group within K-12, geographic target areas and specific program activities (**Oval B**) and then begin implementation of the CORAL model. The program assumes that by building the capacity of local programs and by building broad-based support for these programs and for academic achievement, the groundwork will be laid for an effort that can be sustained in the community after the end of the grant.

Strategies

The implementation of CORAL involves two major strategies that will take place concurrently. These strategies are:

1. providing out-of-school education activities, and
2. raising awareness and mobilizing public support.

In the first strategy, community service providers will deliver out-of-school activities (**Box C**). These organizations will come together to coordinate their programs in line with the CORAL vision for high-quality programs with an educational focus that complements the school curricula. They will create a shared vision of educational success and establish processes by which they can promote coordination, mutual accountability and communication among themselves.

The second strategy involves a broader set of community organizations (such as businesses, faith-based groups, media, government agencies, elected officials and nonprofit organizations), who will draw public attention to CORAL's mission, and deliver consistent messages to influence community norms and ultimately mobilize additional community support and resources in support of CORAL's goal of improved academic achievement of children and youth (**Box D**).

Short-Term Outcomes

The CORAL program assumes that the combination of these two strategies will produce a sustainable network of local programs providing out-of-school activities for children and youth (**Box E**). These programs will provide activities that are coordinated, complementary to the school curriculum, of high quality and educational in nature.

Intermediate Outcomes

A series of interim outcomes are seen as linking the provision of high-quality, out-of-school programs and the goal of improved academic achievement. These intermediate outcomes are extremely important to the success of the CORAL model because they are necessary links in the chain leading to academic success. If they do not happen, then it is unlikely that CORAL will be successful. These interim outcomes describe what will happen to program participants (children, youth and their families) as a result of their participation in CORAL programs.

It is expected that, when the network of high-quality programs is in place in the community, both children and youth and their families will have knowledge of and access to these out-of-school educational programs (**Boxes H and K**). And then, knowing about the programs and being able to access them, it is expected that children, youth and their families will use them. As a result of participating in CORAL out-of-school programs, children and youth will develop the behaviors, attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for academic success (**Box J**). In addition, as a result of CORAL programs, families will be supportive of their children's academic success and be able to advocate for improved education resources and supports for their children (**Box M**). Data on these interim outcomes—knowledge of programs, access to programs, program utilization, behaviors and skills—will provide information as to whether CORAL is working in communities as predicted.

A final interim outcome relates to the importance of an ongoing relationship with a consistent, caring adult to academic success of any child (**Box G**). Some children may have this relationship through their families or other significant adults in their lives. Other children may acquire this relationship through CORAL programs. The program assumes that children and youth need this relationship and that CORAL will either supplement other relationships or fill the void. Youth who have this relationship, in combination with other factors, will experience academic success.

Factors Outside the Model

CORAL is explicitly not addressing several factors known to be important influences on academic success: the quality of schools (**Box F**) and the health and safety of children (**Boxes N and O**).

Although the program acknowledges that one of the important factors contributing to academic success is the quality of schools in a community, CORAL is not a school reform initiative, unlike many other initiatives focused on academic achievement. Instead, CORAL seeks to improve academic achievement by developing out-of-school programs that complement the school curriculum. While CORAL strategies may not directly involve schools, it is expected that CORAL will affect schools to some extent through the families who participate in CORAL. The program is based on an assumption that as families become more knowledgeable and better advocates, they will work to improve the quality of the schools. The program also assumes that schools will be strengthened through the efforts of community organizations and institutions that will be aligning their programs with school curricula to support academic success of children and youth (**Box D**). Finally, the program assumes that the schools will participate as partners in CORAL by contributing to the planning process, sharing information, remaining open to change and ultimately benefiting from the success of the initiative.

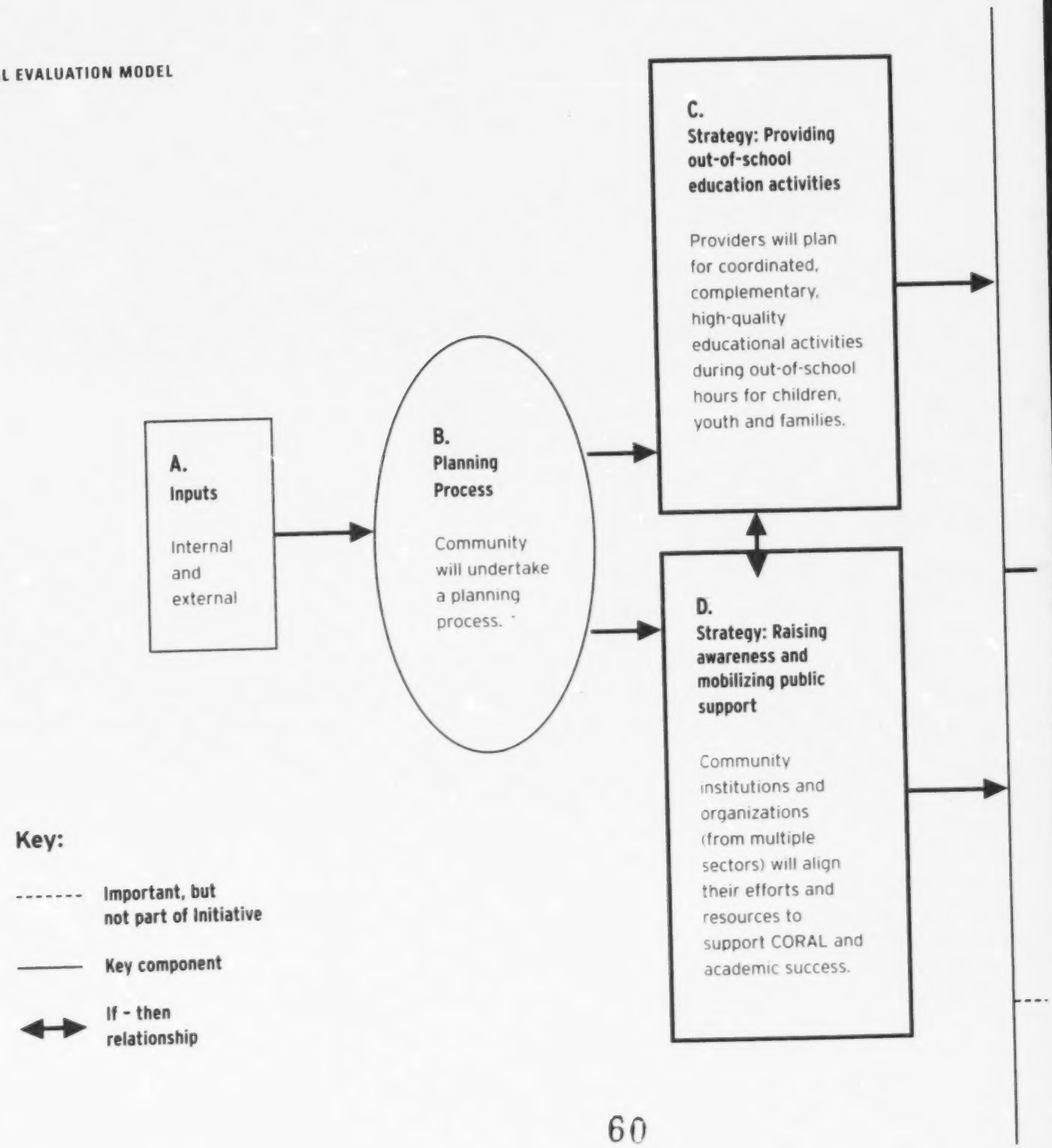
A second set of factors outside the model includes basic health and safety issues. The CORAL theory acknowledges that academic success is not just a matter of knowledge and skills. Families must provide healthy, safe environments, and children must be healthy and safe if they are to achieve academically. The program assumes, however, that for many children and youth, their lack of academic success is grounded in lack of skills and appropriate attitudes and that these can be addressed through after-school programs.

Conclusion

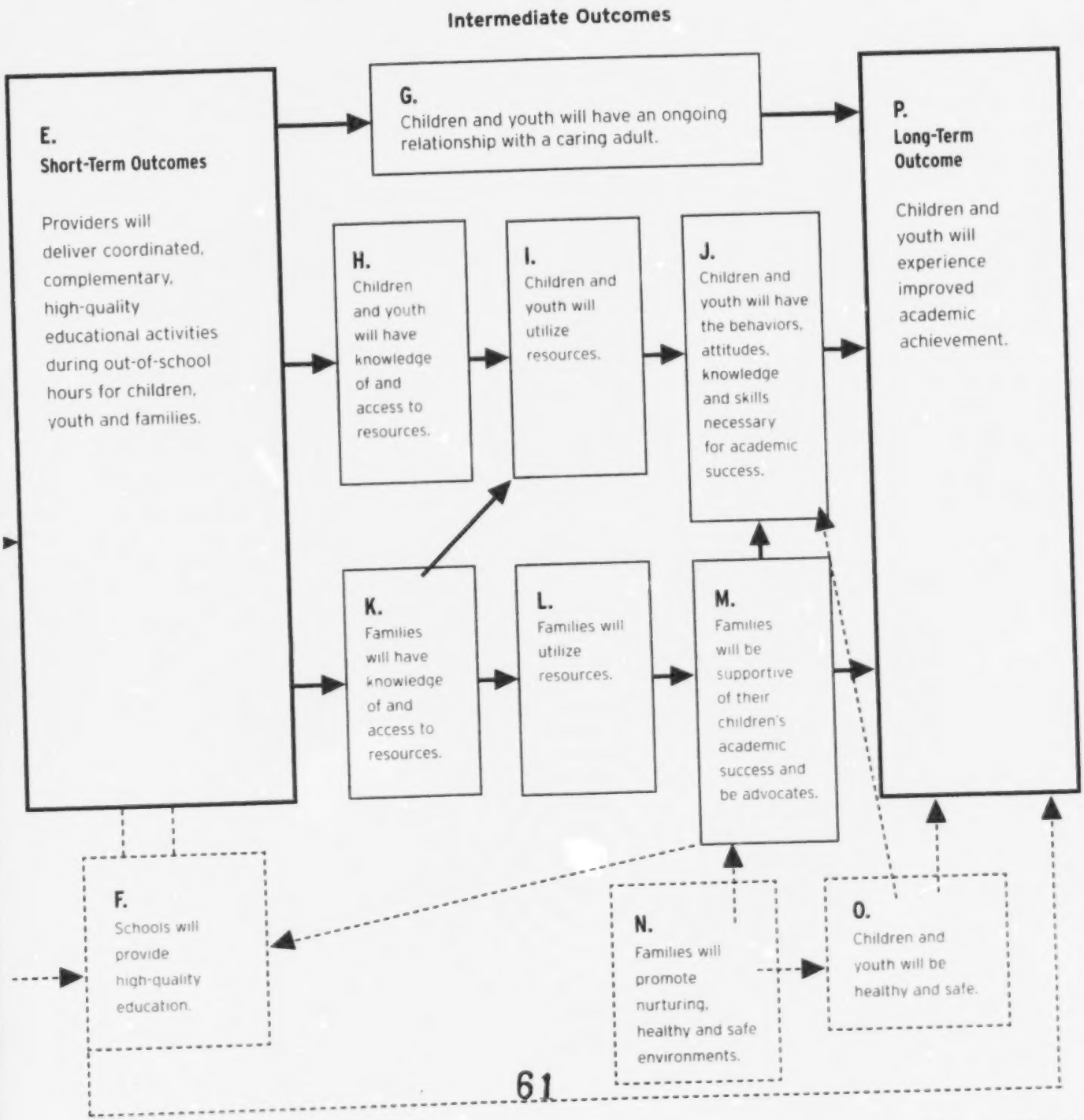
There are several benefits to using program logic models, including: helping funders and program implementers reach consensus about what they are trying to do, allowing the logic of the program components and their hypothesized relationships to be examined and tested, and charting expected progress to long-term outcomes that may not be achieved for several years. By specifying "milestones" of progress for the program ahead of time, progress toward the goals can be assessed periodically and corrections and adjustments made, as indicated by the data collected and as staff and stakeholders in the community gain better understanding of the program and how and why it works.

In summary, the CORAL program is based on a "theory of change" that academic achievement will be improved through a combination of community-level changes. The program model is based on several important assumptions that will be examined and tested by the evaluation: providers will coordinate their efforts, and community institutions will align their resources to support academic success, which in turn will result in a network of outstanding out-of-school programs. The ultimate result of participation by children and families in these programs will be improved academic achievement of children and youth.

CORAL EVALUATION MODEL


C.
Strategy: Providing out-of-school education activities
Providers will plan for coordinated, complementary, high-quality educational activities during out-of-school hours for children, youth and families.
A.
Inputs
Internal and external
B.
Planning Process
Community will undertake a planning process.
D.
Strategy: Raising awareness and mobilizing public support
Community institutions and organizations (from multiple sectors) will align their efforts and resources to support CORAL and academic success.
Key:
Important, but not part of Initiative
Key component
If - then relationship

60


Intermediate Outcomes
E.
Short-Term Outcomes
Providers will deliver coordinated, complementary, high-quality educational activities during out-of-school hours for children, youth and families.
G.
Children and youth will have an ongoing relationship with a caring adult.
P.
Long-Term Outcome
Children and youth will experience improved academic achievement.
H.
Children and youth will have knowledge of and access to resources.
I.
Children and youth will utilize resources.
J.
Children and youth will have the behaviors, attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for academic success.
K.
Families will have knowledge of and access to resources.
L.
Families will utilize resources.
M.
Families will be supportive of their children's academic success and be advocates.
F.
Schools will provide high-quality education.
N.
Families will promote nurturing, healthy and safe environments.
O.
Children and youth will be healthy and safe.

FIFTEEN STRATEGIES OF SUCCESSFUL AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

In the last several years, interest in the quality of after-school programs has grown tremendously. The programs are seen both as a way of providing enriching activities to encourage youth development and as a way to provide children with supervision during a time of day when many might engage in negative behaviors. More recently, after-school programs also have come to be seen as important vehicles for helping to improve the academic achievement of students during school hours.

Unfortunately, research to determine which types of after-school programs work best to improve academic performance has been relatively limited. Most work has focused on the field of youth development, which has consciously targeted non-academic indicators of success such as self-esteem and youth engagement. A separate body of work has focused on the academic practices within successful school classrooms. Far less is known about the salient characteristics of community programs that promote academic achievement on a large scale.

This document synthesizes the existing research on after-school programs, youth development and school effectiveness to develop a list of 15 key strategies used by successful after-school programs, including both organizational and programmatic practices.

Section I: Organizational Practices

1. **Recruit and retain quality staff and volunteers.** Successful programs must recruit and retain diverse and well-qualified managers, staff and volunteers. Staff must be trained to consistently implement the best practices of the organization, and staff size must be sufficient to keep staff-to-student ratios low and provide adequate supervision and attention to participants. Consideration also must be given to promoting ongoing professional development, providing support for staff and establishing clear lines of communication within the organization.

2. **Build strong organizational structures.** Successful organizational governance requires knowledgeable and committed management and board leadership. To ensure effective operation, these leaders must be supported by effective systems for management, budgeting, communications and fundraising. In addition, organizations need to conduct ongoing evaluation and monitoring to track participants, judge the efficacy of efforts and inform program improvement.

3. **Develop effective, focused programming.** Programs must clearly define and develop programmatic strategies that address the goals and issues of the organization and help young people prepare and succeed, not just avoid problems. Important programmatic elements of successful after-school programs are detailed in Section II on page 49.

4. **Help build relationships.** Successful programs enable close relationships with peers and with caring adults. They encourage social interaction and the development of social supports in creating a caring, family environment for youth. These programs also work to build a sense of belonging and group membership among participants, as well as developing lasting relationships between individual participants and the organizations themselves.

5. **Pay attention to safety, health and nutrition issues.** For development to occur, successful organizations must meet the basic physical needs of their participants. Programs should provide accessible, reliable and safe spaces for youth to spend time. Good programs also typically help meet children's nutritional needs by providing a nutritious snack and other meals when appropriate.

6. **Provide structure for youth, with clear expectations and limits.** Programs need to design and communicate high, consistent and fair procedures, rules and standards regarding expected behavior.

7. **Offer challenging programming that is responsive to youth.** Successful programs tailor their content and processes to the needs and interests of youth. Organizations must actively compete for young people's time and attention by building programs that are fun and appealing, while at the same time providing youth with manageable challenges and real opportunities to learn and demonstrate skills and leadership. Youth must be involved in meaningful and responsible roles, including the planning and decision-making of the program itself.

8. **Involve families, schools and other community partners in youth development.** It is important for programs to build links and coordination between themselves, the community, family, other neighborhood and religious organizations and the school system. Successful programs work to coordinate closely with local schools, to establish community advisory boards and to involve partners in program planning.

9. **Perform youth and organizational assessment.** Assessment helps programs to monitor changes in participants as well as involving them in the process of understanding and considering their options. Organizational assessment is key to continuous improvement and meeting the changing needs of youth and community.

10. **Develop partnerships to provide a continuity of care over time.** Research stresses the importance of giving youth room to grow within programs and providing consistent support throughout their childhood and teenage years. Organizations should look to collaborate with other neighborhood groups to build an ongoing network of assistance for youth.

Section II: Key Program Elements

All of the following program elements should be developmentally appropriate to the age of the children and youth served.

11. **Academic.** Successful programs typically include activities with an explicitly academic emphasis. These can include the actual teaching of basic skills; help with homework, tutoring and other learning activities; time and space for quiet study; and enrichment activities to supplement in-school learning. To improve school performance, these learning programs should be coordinated with school curriculum.

12. **Cultural and artistic.** A program's cultural and artistic component helps youth to develop important skills not generally included in the school curriculum. In many cases, this includes arts and music programs, as well as activities encouraging hobbies and life skills development.

13. **Recreational.** After-school programs may provide the only way urban youth can engage in recreational activities. They offer recreational activities to develop physical skills and constructively channel youthful energy. Programs should encourage participation in individual and group sports activities to help youth develop self-esteem and learn cooperation.

14. **Citizenship.** The citizenship component of a program helps youth to recognize, value and understand diverse backgrounds and experiences. It helps participants to build a sense of the greater community and involves them in neighborhood-based community service and community development opportunities.

15. **Vocational.** Vocational elements help to promote an understanding of work and life options and prepare youth for current and future employment. Activities can include providing age-appropriate job readiness training, involving youth in paid and/or volunteer work, and offering information about career and career training options.

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The following is a set of capacity-building services available to CORAL communities and may be complemented by local community expertise.

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- ☐ Keeping informed through written updates
- ☐ Serving on committees
- ☐ Publishing information about CORAL in the media or through neighborhood newsletters and Web pages
- ☐ Coordinating a meeting in my community to provide an orientation to neighbors and constituents regarding CORAL
- ☐ Offering meeting space to CORAL planning and programming
- ☐ Helping facilitate programming and training in my community
- ☐ Serving as a funding partner to leverage CORAL with other local, state and federal funds
- ☐ Serving as a technology partner to assist in strategies to increase technological access to youth and families
- ☐ Providing volunteers

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